

Paul Rassinier

Profiles in History

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Paul Rassinier, widely considered to be the father of Holocaust revisionism, is an unlikely man to have earned such a title. He was born on March 18, 1906 in Beaumont, France. Rassinier would never forget the memory of his father, Joseph, a farmer and a veteran of the French colonial army in Tonkin (present-day Vietnam) being mobilized for World War I. Rassinier refused to take an active role in the War to end all Wars, and rather suffered incarceration in a military prison for his pacifist ideals. Young Paul would also become a dedicated pacifist, a principle that he held to throughout his life. [\[1\]](#)

The France of Rassinier's youth was a mélange of political movements and ideologies. At the age of 16 Rassinier became a member of the Communist Party, having been drawn to it by anarchist Victor Serge. Rassinier's flirtation with Communism would not last long. Turning against its principles, he quickly found himself expelled. His political activities in the years that followed included several attempts at unifying the workers' movement. He joined the Socialist Party in February of 1934. [\[2\]](#)

By the Summer of 1940, Rassinier would witness France's military collapse and surrender to Nazi Germany. He became one of the founding members of the "Libre-Nord" movement, the French Resistance movement to liberate the northern occupied zone of their country. Even during this difficult time, Rassinier continued to preach the principles of non-violence and pacifism. His ideals were unwelcome to many within the movement and he would find himself condemned to death by members of the Communist resistance. [\[3\]](#) His "rescue" from a death sentence came in October of 1943 when he was arrested by the Nazi Gestapo for various activities including the smuggling of Jewish refugees over the Franco-Swiss border. Rassinier was sent to the concentration camp at Buchenwald for his activities. Later he would be moved to Dora where he would stay through the war's end.



Revisionist pioneer, Paul Rassinier

After the war, Rassinier returned to his native France and was elected to the Assemblée Nationale. He was awarded the highest decoration by the French government for his involvement with the Resistance during the war. Rassinier, who was trained in history, set out after the war to document his experiences within the German concentration camp system. Rassinier paints a horrible picture of the dead being brought from Dora to Buchenwald for cremation, "Every day trucks brought full loads of dead bodies

from Dora to be cremated at Buchenwald, and it was from the presence of these corpses that the horrors of the camp were deduced." [4]

Rassinier also details the alarming death rate at Buchenwald due to "... bad treatment, the poor and insufficient food, the superhuman workload, the lack of medicines, and ... pneumonia." [5] It was in the period following the publication of his earliest works that he realized that many of the war-time stories other inmates were telling were popular but execrable exaggerations. Rassinier wrote,

"Then one day I realized that a false picture of the German camps had been created and that the problem of the concentration camps was a universal one, not just one that could be disposed of by placing it on the doorstep of the National Socialists. The deportees, many of whom were Communists, had been largely responsible for leading international political thinking to such an erroneous conclusion. I suddenly felt that by remaining silent I was an accomplice to a dangerous influence." [6]

Rassinier began to debunk and deconstruct the works of his fellow inmates. He made a tremendous effort to debunk Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Rassinier went as far as to predict that in the future, Hilberg's volume "will not be spoken of at all, or if it is still mentioned, it will only be mentioned in reference to something unworthy of notice except as an example of the most scandalous aberrations of our times." [7] It is a sad comment on the power and persistence of the Holocaust-exaggeration campaign, if not on the frailty of the historical process itself, that today most persons concerned with the matter would describe (on the record) Rassinier's work in the terms he used for Hilberg's, and vice-versa. Hilberg is today limned as "the dean of Holocaust historiography," while Rassinier, years-long veteran of the camps though he is, is dismissed as a "Holocaust denier." However, the future is not over yet. Rassinier's prediction may yet come to pass, if only by one scholar at a time.

By now, Rassinier had become skeptical of the lurid gas-chamber stories which were being circulated. He wrote, "In 1950, it was still too soon to pronounce a definite judgment on the existence of gas chambers in the camps; documents were wanting and those that existed were incomplete, inexact, and obviously apocryphal or falsified." [8] In the 1964 book, *The Drama of the European Jews*, Rassinier's view became more firm:

"With regard to gas chambers, the almost endless procession of false witnesses and of falsified documents to which I have invited the reader's attention during this long study, proves, nevertheless, only one thing: never at any moment did the responsible authorities of the Third Reich intend to order, or in fact order, the extermination of the Jews in this or any other manner. Did such exterminations take place without orders? This question has haunted me for fifteen years." [9]

Rassinier had determined that no widespread gassings took place and that there was no policy to exterminate the Jews of Europe. He also provided historians with the first real quantitative analysis of Jewish wartime deaths. His final total put the range of Jewish deaths for the twelve years of Nazism between 987,592 and 1,589,492. [10] Many years later, Professor Arthur Butz, author of *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* basically accepted Rassinier's analysis and commented, "I will offer here no definite estimate of Jewish losses. However, I have no strong reason to quarrel with Rassinier's estimate." [11]

Rassinier would later become even more certain about the falsity of the gas-chamber claims. As a result of his studies, he made the following conclusion in *The Real Eichmann Trial*, "There never were any gas chambers, nor any exterminations by that method at Auschwitz-Birkenau." [12]

By 1960 Rassinier's works were discovered by revisionist pioneer Harry Elmer Barnes. Barnes, who was noted for his trail-blazing work on World War I, had been publishing numerous works to show that a similar situation existed with regard to World War II. Rassinier's books made a tremendous impact on Barnes. Barnes made reference to Rassinier in his article, "Revisionism and Brainwashing" commenting on "the discouragement and smearing of outsiders like the distinguished French historian Paul Rassinier, who sought to expose the exaggerations of the atrocity stories." [13]

By the mid-1960s Barnes had completed having Rassinier's works translated into English. Barnes then ran headlong into the American publishing industry's self-imposed censorship. No publishing house was willing to publish Rassinier's works. Barnes, never one to be silenced, personally photocopied 40 copies of the typewritten English translations and distributed them to his professional associates. [14]

At the age of 61, Rassinier passed away on July 29, 1967. It would be more than ten years before The Noontide Press collected four of his most important works, *The Crossing of the Line*, *The Lie of Ulysses*, *Ulysses Betrayed by his Own*, and *The Drama of the European Jews* and made them available to the English-speaking world.

Notes:

- [1] Online: <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Rassinier>> Date: 30 Oct. 2010.
- [2] Paul Rassinier, *The Real Eichmann Trial, or the Incurable Victims*, Institute for Historical Review, Torrance, Cal., 1983, p.5
- [3] Ibid.
- [4] Paul Rassinier, *The Holocaust Story and the Lie of Ulysses*, Institute for Historical Review, Costa Mesa, Cal., 1978, p.38.
- [5] Ibid., p.44.
- [6] Ibid., p.109.
- [7] Ibid., p. 212.
- [8] Ibid., p.158.
- [9] Ibid., p.270.
- [10] Ibid., p.389-90.
- [11] Arthur R. Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century: The Case against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry*, Institute for Historical Review, Torrance, Cal., 1985, p.17.
- [12] Rassinier, *The Real Eichmann Trial*. p.98.

[13] Harry Elmer Barnes, *The Barnes Trilogy*. Institute for Historical Review, Torrance, Cal., 1979, p. vi.

[14] *Ibid.*, p.vii.

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